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ABSTRACT

Assisting disseminators to evaluate their efforts at improving education through effective practices and products is the aim of this guide. Offering suggested approaches within a framework, it attempts to work with objectives already defined, rather than helping with writing objectives. Given in five parts: (1) introduction and overview; (2) definitions regarding dissemination; (3) framework for determining impact and evaluative questions; (4) application through a fictional situation and (5) summary, the guide is strictly an objective-based effort, based on the assumption that existing written objectives are valid. The actual dissemination is the process by which research and development information--materials, projects, methods--is moved from where it originates to the potential user. The evaluation design must assess the impact by its positive or negative extent. Cost limitations are always a major concern, but within any given parameters, the treatment and methodology can be assessed. The Dissemination Analysis Group (DAG) has classified the spread, exchange, choice and implementation (through telling, showing, helping, training, involving and interviewing) of the research and development materials with focus on the difficulties that some categories denote action by disseminator, while others indicate action by the practitioner. (CE)

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A DISSEMINATOR'S GUIDE FOR EVALUATING IMPACT

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Disseminators within the National Institute of Education's (NIE) Regional Program have become involved in a wide variety of activities aimed at improving education through facilitation of the widespread use of effective practices and products. Those who have designed and implemented myriad dissemination efforts, both in the Research and Development Exchange (RDx) and within State Dissemination Capacity Building Projects, have now begun to attempt to assess the impact of their efforts. This guide was produced by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Dissemination Support Service (DSS) to aid disseminators in that task.

Purpose of the Guide

The guide's primary purpose is to assist disseminators in their efforts to evaluate impact by providing suggested approaches within a framework. Although a number of major studies regarding dissemination evaluation have been published, reference guides for planning and conducting evaluation are not readily available.

One important point should be noted at the outset; the guide is not intended to help in writing objectives, but to work with objectives already defined. It is an objective-based effort, based on the assumption that existing written objectives are valid.

Overview of the Guide

There are five major sections in the guide:

Section One provides an introduction and overview.

Section Two reviews the general definitions in use regarding dissemination.

Section Three provides a framework for determining impact and includes evaluative questions to be addressed throughout the process.

Section Four provides an example of the application of the framework using a fictional situation.

Section Five provides a summary.

The Appendix contains an annotated list of resources.

Guide Parameters

Impact evaluation is an emerging interest. Because of this, several major issues will remain unresolved. First, no clear, universally accepted definition of impact exists at this time in regard to dissemination activities. For the purposes of this guide, impact can be interpreted to mean the result of dissemination activities. Dissemination itself is viewed as being a process by which R&D information--materials, projects, methods, and so on--is moved from where it originates to the potential user. The result of any disseminator's efforts can be categorized as effecting positive change, negative change, or no change. The important point is that the evaluation design should accommodate a process by which a determination can be made as to whether any impact occurred and its positive or negative extent. Other complex considerations also enter into the impact definition. Many other factors may attenuate the treatment; and methodology, because of the emerging state of the art, may not be well defined. A major complicating factor, as always, is cost limitations. Another factor is the time elapsed from treatment to effect to later evaluation. The organizational level at which impact should be measured (primary, tertiary, and so on), and whether any assessment of impact must take into account attitudinal as well as behavioral changes are additional factors to be considered. Decisions regarding management of these factors must be left up to

individuals in determining their evaluation strategies. Despite these complications, however, it is envisioned that the guide will provide recipients with useful ideas for determining the impact of their dissemination activities.

SECTION TWO

OVERVIEW OF DISSEMINATION

There has been considerable discussion and debate regarding what constitutes dissemination. For purposes of this guide and its treatment of impact evaluation, the range of activities described by the Dissemination Analysis Group (DAG) was accepted as the general definition of what consitutes dissemination. Other descriptions and definitions were also reviewed in order to maintain a broad view. The important point is that disseminators strive to assist in the improvement of educational efforts; the activities in which they engage are the legitimate processes to assess in impact evaluation.

The classifications system advanced by DAG includes:

Level 1: Spread. The one-way distribution of knowledge in all its forms, including information, products, ideas and materials. Examples are publications and general mailings.

Level 2: Exchange. The two- or multi-way flow of information, products, ideas and materials. Examples are conferences and site visits.

Level 3: Choice. The facilitation of consideration and selection among those ideas, materials, practices, and other knowledge that can be used for educational improvement. Examples are traveling exhibits and catalogs comparing alternatives.

Level 4: Implementation. The facilitation of adoption and installation of improvements. Examples are consultation, technical assistance on site, and locally suited training programs.

Another, more recent, delineation of dissemination techniques devised by Smith (1981) includes:

1. Telling (as in articles, books, newsletters, presentations, etc.)

2. Showing (using audiovisual materials and by demonstration)

3. Helping (through technical assistance and consultation)

4. Training (through workshops, courses, etc.)

5. Involving and intervening (working with the adopter)

As Smith pointed out, developers and researchers very often think of dissemination primarily as telling, usually through printed materials, and not often enough as one or all of the other activities listed above.

One of the difficulties in determining impact or in designing evaluation plans is that some categories denote action by the disseminator, while others indicate action by the practitioner. The kinds of activities included range from those that move information from the R&D community to the practitioners to full-scale training efforts. This caveat is not intended to discourage evaluation planners; rather, it is intended to convey a sense of the complexity of the task and to suggest the need for careful and adequate planning.

SECTION THREE

A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DISSEMINATION SERVICES

The purpose of this section is to provide a structure or framework for evaluating the impact of dissemination. This structure is comprised of four components:

1. Program Description
2. Evaluation Focus
3. Data Collection and Analysis
4. Impact Assessment

The framework is presented in Table 1. Within each of the components are the steps it encompasses. Each of these, in turn, is broken down into subquestions to guide the evaluation procedure. The actual content of the questions, their major emphasis, and the way the answers are formulated are matters which can be fully addressed only with reference to a specific activity and the level of dissemination at which the activity takes place.

Program Description

The identification of these four elements constitutes the program description:

- What is being disseminated?
- To whom is it being disseminated?
- For what purpose?
- By what means?

Table I

A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE IMPACT
OF DISSEMINATION SERVICES

Program Description

A. Identify what it is that is being disseminated.

1. What services are provided?
2. What needs do they address?
3. What influenced the decision to provide these services as opposed to others?

B. Identify the recipient of the dissemination service.

1. Who is the recipient?
2. Was the recipient involved in defining the need for the service?
3. What is the recipient's linkage to the dissemination process?
4. What is the recipient's role and responsibility in the dissemination process?

C. Identify the objective of the dissemination.

1. What is the primary intent of the dissemination?
2. What are the secondary intents of the dissemination?
3. What needs are to be met by the dissemination?
4. At what organizational level is impact intended?

D. Identify the design for the dissemination.

1. What is the structural flow of the dissemination?
2. What are the authority/responsibility relationships?
3. What are the provisions for internal and external communication?
4. What is the overall design of the dissemination program?

Evaluation Focus

A. Identify the audience of the evaluation information.

1. Who wants evaluation information?
2. What do they want to know?
3. Why do they want this information?

B. Delineate the questions to be addressed.

1. What specific questions are to be answered?
2. What success criteria will be used in determining the answers?
3. What will be the evaluation unit of analysis--a single service or cluster of services?

C. Assess practical issues in the evaluation.

1. Are evaluation costs within the range of available funds?
2 What is the timeline for completing each step of the evaluation?
3. Can information gained in prior evaluations be coordinated with present needs?

D. Determine information sources and instruments.

1. What information is needed to respond to the questions?
2. Who can provide this information?
3. What data collection method will be used?
4. Will an existing measurement instrument be used or a new one developed?
5. Will sampling be used?
6. Will program implementation as well as program outcomes be measured?

Data Collection and Analysis

A. Implement data collection plan.

1. Are there unforeseen difficulties in data collection?
2. Are unintended effects apparent during data collection that are not provided for by the evaluation?

B. Analyze data.

1. Is the analysis of data consistent with questions addressed?
2. Would it be useful to perform a secondary analysis--that is, to analyze the data in a different way to address different types of questions?

Impact Assessment

A. Determine the impact through the measurement instruments chosen.

1. Were specific objectives achieved?
2. Were there any positive unintended effects?
3. Were there any negative unintended effects?
4. Was the program implemented as intended?

B. Draw Conclusions

1. How close did the actual impact come to the intended impact?
2. Which factors facilitated achievement of objectives? Hindered?
3. What was the role of unintended effects?
4. What was the overall success of the service?
5. Which segments should be repeated? Discontinued? Refined?

Whether one is evaluating a system of dissemination or a component of a system, it is important to provide a complete description of what it is that is being evaluated. The impact of the dissemination will be judged, at least in part, in light of information provided in the program description about goals and objectives, designs and processes.

A worksheet is provided (Worksheet 1) to help organize the program description. If several services are being provided and the evaluation cannot cover them all, enter a priority ranking to determine which are the most important evaluation targets.

Evaluation Focus

Focusing the evaluation entails identifying the audience and purposes for the evaluation, and specifying the areas of the program that will be the focus of the evaluation. It also includes the consideration of practical issues such as cost and time, and the planning of data collection and analysis. Worksheet 2 covers many of the major factors in a good evaluation plan. This sheet should be filled out as the plan is developed.

Audience. When an evaluation is undertaken, the planners need to keep in mind from the start who needs the information and what their needs are. In this way, the chances of eventual utilization of the information can be maximized. Often there are two or more audiences, one of which is a primary audience. For example, a primary audience might be the funding agency, while the project director or other host organization administrators might consitute secondary audiences. These different audiences could have very different information needs. It would be to the advantage of the program director or the evaluation team to determine

Worksheet 1
Program Description

DEFINING THE DISSEMINATION PROGRAM TO BE EVALUATED

Dissemination Service	Recipient	DAG Function	Objective	Priority Ranking for Evaluation
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Worksheet 2
Evaluation Focus

EVALUATION PLANNING SHEET

Audience for the Evaluation	Evaluation Question	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Instrument	Analysis Plan
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

these information needs very early in the development of the program in order to ensure the collection of the necessary data during the appropriate stage of program development.

Evaluation questions. Frequently, limited resources--including time-- do not allow for an evaluation plan which addresses all questions which might be of interest to the various audiences. Thus, the manager or evaluator must negotiate with the relevant audiences the major questions to be addressed. In addition, the evaluation team must meet with the relevant audiences to determine the range of possible answers to the evaluation questions to be considered; to formulate criteria to be employed in judging success or failure; to clarify the assumptions to be made (i.e., those pertaining to design, analysis and measurement); to define the system in which the evaluation is to occur; and to determine the policy and contractual agreements which will govern the evaluation work. These things should be accomplished during the planning of the study, but should also be open for reconsideration throughout the study.

In evaluation planning a decision is often required regarding what the unit of analysis will be. In dissemination terms, this question refers to whether the evaluation will focus on single-service events, combinations of like events, a series of related events, the entire State Capacity Building Project or Regional Exchange, and so forth. Often several services to clients, such as mailings, workshops and individualized conferences, will be related to the same overall objective and, in such cases, it is often more relevant to focus on them together as a unit. Cost considerations can also favor evaluating a cluster of services rather than a series of individual ones. If services are to be combined for evaluation purposes, then questionnaires, interviews and

other data instruments can inquire about the effectiveness of the program rather than each of its components, and results can be sought following a series of services rather than each one individually.

Two worksheets (Worksheets 3a and 3b) are provided to aid in the determination of the unit of analysis. If one is uncertain what the unit will be, Worksheet 3a should be used first. In the left hand column list all the dissemination services that are to be evaluated. For each of these, in the middle column list the service's objective. Those services with similar objectives are likely candidates for grouping into a single unit. In the third column, indicate your grouping scheme. Worksheet 3b is a summarizing tool. At the top of the page list the conceptual unit and its objective. Underneath this, list all the component services that are included in the unit.

Worksheet 3a

DETERMINING THE EVALUATION UNIT OF ANALYSIS

List of Individual Dissemination Services	Objective of the Service	Grouping Scheme*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

*NOTE: Grouping may occur around clusters of services pertaining to a single objective or around similar objectives.

Worksheet 3b

SPECIFYING THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Unit of Analysis (description of service):

Objective:

Is the service to be evaluated:

A single case of a provision of a service? _____
A cluster of similar events? _____
General services for all clients? _____
The whole program? _____
Other (state): _____

Component service description:

Service (list)	Objective	Recipient
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Practical concerns: Cost, timing and previous efforts. Evaluation costs should be determined at the planning stage so that the study's scope can be assured of fitting the available resources. Be certain to include all costs related to evaluation activities, including salaries, benefits, consultants, equipment, office supplies, use of computer time, travel, telephone and postage, reproduction costs, and so on (Kiefert and Maser, 1977). A checklist (Worksheet 4) has been provided to help organize these cost considerations. The available evaluation funds, of course, should exceed the expense estimate--with a wide enough margin to allow for unexpected costs. If funds are a problem, the budget may have to be trimmed or a sub-area of the planned evaluation may have to be dropped.

The schedule for the evaluation should be planned to whatever degree possible at the outset. Generally, the final completion date is specified, and various stages along the way (such as data collection) must be planned and carried out according to careful scheduling. The other steps in the evaluation should be planned to coincide with these requirements. A timelog has been supplied (Worksheet 5) which can be useful in scheduling. For each of the major evaluation steps, the starting date and completion date should be filled in.

Worksheet 4

ASSESSING THE COST OF THE EVALUATION

1. Funds available for the evaluation: _____

2. Estimate of expenses involved in the evaluation:

Staff salaries	_____
Consultants	_____
Data Instruments	_____
Telephone and Postage	_____
Equipment	_____
Computer Costs	_____
Travel	_____
Other (specify):	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
TOTAL:	_____

3. Do available funds exceed the planned expenses? YES____ NO____

Worksheet 5

EVALUATION TIMELOG

Activity	Starting Date	Completion Date
1. Describe the dissemination program to be evaluated.	_____	_____
2. Clarify the goals and purposes of the evaluation.		
a. Identify audience	_____	_____
b. Delineate evaluation questions	_____	_____
c. Assess practical issues	_____	_____
d. Determine data sources	_____	_____
3. Implement the evaluation plan.		
a. Assemble data:		
Data source A (describe) _____	_____	_____
Data source B (describe) _____	_____	_____
Data source C (describe) _____	_____	_____
b. Analyze data.	_____	_____
4. Assess program impact and report the results.		
a. Determine impact and draw conclusions	_____	_____
b. Report orally (if appropriate)	_____	_____
c. Final report	_____	_____

If your organization has previously undertaken some evaluation efforts, such as surveys, interviews or case studies, these can prove useful in the current evaluation plan. First, the development work might be generalizable; the instruments previously used might be appropriate with little or no modification, or perhaps effort could be saved by referring to previous analysis designs, computer programs, and so on. Second, the information the previous studies supplied might in some cases be interpretable as baseline data. On the other hand, in many cases, past work will not be pertinent to present needs and will contribute little, making it necessary to proceed independently of the prior efforts. The utility and generalizability of prior evaluations must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Information sources and instruments. Once the practical issues have been assessed, one's attention should turn to a plan for collecting the necessary information. The kind of data one needs can be determined from an examination of the evaluation questions. Examples of different kinds of data that might be useful are requests for mailings or consultations, workshop evaluations and follow-up studies on information utilization, district staff attitudes, success of new program implementation, etc. The source of the data can likewise be directly determined. For example, a question about the impact of a catalog of current materials disseminated to teachers would suggest teachers or someone working with teachers as the most likely source of information. Sometimes it will be useful for purposes of objectivity to collect information from different populations, such as teachers and administrators.

Several data collection methods are often applicable to a particular question, and one can draw from such techniques as interviews, questionnaires, existing records or, in some cases, observation. Each of

these carries its own unique advantages and disadvantages, and the reader is referred to an evaluation handbook (e.g., Faddis, et al., 1981) for a fuller treatment. Again, drawing from several techniques (such as interviews and existing records) can give a more complete picture than any one method alone. When the choice of collection methods is made, one can determine whether a measurement instrument has to be developed for the purpose or whether an existing one is suitable.

Another consideration is deciding the breadth of the analysis; will sampling suffice? A monthly newsletter published by Capitol Publications, Inc., entitled How To: Evaluate Education Programs (July 1980), suggests that correct use of sampling procedures may save time and money and also avoid inconvenience for a number of people and lists several points to consider. Sampling is suggested when:

- The cost and difficulty of getting data from all clients is prohibitive.
- Mathematical precision is not essential for drawing conclusions.
- The information yielded by sampling will be adequate for the purpose and audience for the evaluation.
- It is posssible to use proper sampling methods.

In addition, the evaluation should include a means for measuring the degree to which the program was implemented as intended. In this way, in the case of negative results one will know whether the program was poorly planned or just poorly implemented.

Data analysis plan. A final step in planning is deciding on the analysis plan. One might require a statistical test between groups of scores or simply a tabulation of respondents and percentages. The choice of information type and measurement instrument will determine the analysis to some degree.

Worksheet 6 has been included as a review sheet for the evaluation plan. A good plan should incorporate as many of the feasibility factors in Parts A and B as possible. Part C relates to prior evaluation efforts. These efforts may or may not be useful for current concerns.

Worksheet 6

EVALUATION PLAN REVIEW SHEET

A. Feasibility of task to be evaluated.

Is the task: Central to your work?

Frequently performed?

One that affects many people?

Open to alternative styles of management?

Affordable to evaluate?

(Answers should be affirmative.)

B. Feasibility of the evaluation plan.

Does the plan: Address current concerns?

Accommodate existing resources and timelines?

Avoid disrupting normal activity?

Promise to yield the data you need?

(Answers should be affirmative.)

C. Continuity of evaluation efforts.

Should past evaluation efforts continue?

Are past efforts used in the current plan?

How can you build on current effort for future evaluation?

How can evaluation be integrated into other activities?

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection. The collection and analysis of data should proceed according to plans developed in the preceding step. However, during the actual data collection process, it may be necessary to modify the data collection plan. Unforeseen obstacles (e.g., missing data files, low response rate, unexpected time considerations, etc.) or unanticipated observations (e.g., discrepancy in what was expected to be going on and what was actually going on) may make it necessary to change the study sample, limit or expand the scope of data collection or modify the plan in some other way. In these cases the data collection plan should be adapted to the situation rather than vice versa.

Data analysis. Data analysis involves (a) cleaning the data, (b) analyzing it as planned, and (c) re-analyzing it should it become useful to do so. In cleaning the data, the concern is the elimination of misleading or biased information. For example, data provided by a principal in a questionnaire that was meant for teachers should be eliminated if the objective is to report how teachers feel about the dissemination. Another example would be the discovery of inappropriate response patterns by the sample, perhaps through misunderstanding of the directions. Any irregularity that might cause misinterpretation of results should be eliminated from the analysis. The data analysis technique should have been defined in planning the evaluation study. At this point it is a matter of conducting the analysis as planned. In addition, new relationships among the data may appear that suggest new forms of analysis. Assuming that time and funds are available, it is recommended that secondary analysis of the data be done to maximize the use of available data. Frequently, other kinds of questions which might not have been apparent or important during the planning of the study can be addressed by secondary analysis of existing data.

A data analysis checklist has been provided (Worksheet 7). If the evaluation proceeds exactly as planned, each of the six questions should receive a NO response. However, it is likely that there will be a change necessitated somewhere in the data collection and analysis. If so, some adjustment in the analysis will be required--e.g., a low initial response rate might lead to further mailings before any analysis begins, or nonuniform data collection might require some of the data to be invalidated. For these design or analysis problems, it is best to consult with an evaluation expert on the staff or in the field.

Worksheet 7

DATA ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
1. Were any of the planned respondents unable to participate in data collection?	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

2. Were data collection procedures nonuniform in the sample?	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

3. Were data instruments incorrectly filled out:	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

	YES	NO
4. Did any difficulties arise in the data collection that might have compromised the validity of the data?	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

5. Did any difficulties arise in data analysis?	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

6. Was a secondary analysis called for when reviewing the results?	____	____

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

Impact Assessment

The final stage of the process is the assessment of impact. Worksheet 8 has been provided to assist with the organization of this stage. First, the answers to the specified evaluation questions are determined from the data analysis. When the instrumentation, methodology and analysis have been designed to reflect the evaluation question, this is a fairly straightforward procedure. For instance, if the evaluation question concerned whether staff attitudes improved as a result of a series of workshops, a post-program attitude measure used in comparison with pre-program scores will provide relevant information. In this way it can be judged whether specific objectives were achieved.

On the other hand, if there were data collection problems necessitating a change in method, additional caution must be exercised in determining answers. For example, suppose that the sample of respondents had to be restricted after the start of data collection. In order to verify the new sample's relevance to the original evaluation question, the evaluation team must be sure that the adjusted sample is still representative of the population of interest--i.e., did each member of the population have an equal chance of being selected into the sample?

The roles of unintended effects, positive or negative, must also be considered. For instance, through interaction with program staff during data collection, an evaluator might have found that staff attitudes were tremendously improved, even though the data instruments were designed only to measure frequency of interaction. This finding should be included in any observation report that comes out of the evaluation, and should be considered in drawing conclusions regarding the future of the program.

Worksheet 8

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY FORM*

Evaluation question (state):

1. Was a clear answer obtained? (state):

2. Unintended positive effects (if any):

   a. How valuable is this effect?

   b. Is the effect stable?

3. Unintended negative effects (if any):

   a. How serious is this effect?

   b. Is the problem resolvable in future applications?

4. Overall nature of impact:

5. Conclusions (outline):

*NOTE: Use one page for each evaluation question.

The implementation of the dissemination plan should be checked along with outcomes. This can be done through documentation of the program's activities. Too often interventions have been judged to have had little or no impact when in fact the problem was that they were never implemented as planned. With information available about the extent of implementation, it will be possible to make more informed decisions about whether it is necessary to change the dissemination plan or simply implement it more faithfully.

After discovering the actual impact of the program, it is possible to draw conclusions relevant to subsequent decision making. This step is distinguished from the previous one in that it is more broadly focused. The disseminator must review the evaluation, explain the obtained results, and make decisions regarding future actions. Specific considerations in this process would include: causal linkages between program elements and results; which program factors facilitated (and which hindered) achievement of the objectives; the presence and significance of unintended effects; the implications of any secondary analyses that were carried out; and, finally, which segments should be continued, modified or dropped.

The procedural outline presented here is considered to be a framework because it is meant to guide rather than restrict the process of impact evaluation. Individual programs will present particular considerations that may change the emphases offered here. The next section provides an example of how impact evaluation might be conducted.

SECTION FOUR

AN APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

In order to illustrate the use of the framework, a simulated example is presented. This example is meant to illustrate the steps discussed in Section Three. The reader may find it useful to refer to Table I when reading this Section. It will also be useful to refer to the completed worksheets which have been provided for illustration. It must be remembered, of course, that each situation will present specific details that will change the application of the framework.

One factor, for instance, that will influence the form and planning of the evaluation is the source of the perceived need for the study. If internal project personnel have raised the questions of impact and are seeking answers for internal formative purposes, the planning phase of the study is simplified; decisions regarding the stating of objectives and measurement instruments do not require outside consultations. This is not meant to discourage the seeking of input from various sources, nor does it mean that less clarity is needed in the planning phase. But the steps of matching the evaluation questions, measurement and analysis procedures to the persons making eventual decisions are crucial. If the impact questions have been raised by other agencies or will be of interest to them--e.g., funding agencies or host agencies--these organizations must be brought in at the start to obtain the maximum possible assurance that the study will be meaningful to them.

The example presented here involved a State Capacity Building Project entering its final year of federal funding. Project personnel felt confident in their relations with local school districts and believed

that their information dissemination activities were useful to some extent. Nevertheless, the extent to which LEAs actually used the information they received in local policy planning and decision making at the district or school level had not been studied systematically. The original contract called only for an evaluation of the implementation of activities. As projected, the State Capacity Building Project had established a Materials Center and links to the ERIC system, and a procedure for responding to LEA requests. Now the agency's personnel were interested in obtaining data on the kind and extent of positive impact occurring as a result of their program's dissemination activities. They hoped that the State Education Agency would continue the project after federal funding expired, and they felt that strong data supporting local impact would be very helpful.

The project personnel first assembled an evaluation team. They contracted with an outside evaluator and assigned one of their own staff to work on the evaluation as well. They requested consultation with their Regional Exchange office, and the Rx assigned an individual to work on the evaluation part time. Finally, they asked for input from the director of the Professional Services Division of the SEA, since they realized that information resulting from the evaluation would eventually be considered by the SEA in any continuation decision. At that later point, it would have to make sense to state agency administrators, and so the director's input was requested early in the process. He was able to attend most of the planning sessions and kept in close contact with the evaluation team as the study progressed.

In beginning the evaluation, the evaluation team first turned its attention to the program description. The service to be studied was identified as the project's normal procedure for handling information requests. Ideally the project would determine the impact for all of its dissemination activities, but because of limitations of time, money and personnel, the evaluation team had to limit its scope. Responding to information requests was one of the major activities of the agency. Normally, when a district or school sent in an inquiry, the project conducted a computer search of the ERIC files and its own Materials Center and sent back an output of article abstracts resulting from the search. The clients would look through these abstracts and send back a letter identifying which articles or documents they felt were particularly relevant to their needs. The project people would then send the articles requested--which would complete the interaction unless further requests were made.

The impact of this project activity was considered relevant to both potential audiences. From the SEA's point of view, a demonstrated impact would be a strong argument in favor of continuing the project when its federal funding expired. From the State Capacity Building Project's point of view, the results of the study could have bearing on whether the current procedure should be continued, refined or scrapped in favor of an alternative one.

Worksheet 1
Program Description

DEFINING THE DISSEMINATION PROGRAM TO BE EVALUATED

Dissemination Service	Recipient	DAG Function	Objective	Priority Ranking for Evaluation
1. State Capacity Building Projects response to information requests.	District administrators, school administrators	EXCHANGE	(a) To provide local personnel with the means of obtaining desired information. (b) To ease, inform and improve local decision making.	1
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

The recipients of services were administrative personnel in the schools and districts of the project area. In this case the identification of recipients was not difficult since the service is a reactive one and contact is initiated by the client; this decision can be more complex in other cases. It is a good idea to view recipients as specifically as possible--i.e., individuals or offices. If the clients' identity is vague (e.g., "all schools in the state"), your decisions on where and how to administer the evaluation might be more arbitrary. One question that did arise was whether the "recipients" should include potential requesters as well as actual requesters. The evaluators decided that since this service is a reactive, responsive type, only those districts making requests would be considered in the population of interest. The question was not one of proactive services--it was whether those people requesting information actually made use of it later. The proactive dissemination activities, although equally important, would fall under another category.

Determining the goals and objectives of the service required some careful focusing. At first glance one might think that "successful impact" would translate into a change in all or most cases. But an intriguing topic often turns out on inspection to be not what one needs or wants, a phenomenon not limited to evaluation practice. The conscientious local administrator can and should keep up on new educational developments, not all of which will be relevant for utilization in that district--the state capacity project aids that awareness process. Therefore the evaluators decided that "impact" of their service should be viewed in terms of whether the service increased

knowledge, reduced uncertainty, and aided in local decision making. In this case, the evaluators stated the goals this way:

GOAL: To provide a linkage service enabling local educators to increase their knowledge of new developments in all areas of educational thought and practice.

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide local educational personnel with the means of obtaining a moderate or wide knowledge of any topic relevant to their administrative or informational needs.
- To provide an efficient information service that can ease, inform and improve the quality of local decision making.

The next series of steps involved focusing the evaluation. First, in light of the funding considerations previously described, the audience for this information was identified as being primarily the SEA. The information would also be gathered so as to be useful to people within the project itself, so project personnel were considered a secondary audience.

The next step was to establish the evaluation questions. Given the previous considerations, the evaluators decided to concentrate on two factors. The first factor was the clients' satisfaction with the extent of the information provided; that is, could they obtain information about their topic to a desired depth and specificity? The second factor was the extent of utilization of the information in decision making. The questions they decided on were these:

1. To what extent do clients perceive their informational needs satisfied by the information distribution service?
2. To what extent is the information provided by the service incorporated into the decision making process at the local level?

Through discussion the team agreed that 75 percent of respondents expressing satisfaction in question 1 and 50 percent of respondents reporting information use (question 2) would be considered successful for the project.

Worksheet 2
Evaluation Focus

EVALUATION PLANNING SHEET

Audience for the Evaluation	Evaluation Question	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Instrument	Analysis Plan
1. State Education Agency	1. To what extent do clients perceive their informational needs satisfied by the information distribution service?	Administrators requesting info.	Questionnaire sent by mail to a representative district sample.	Specifically developed questionnaire.	Tabulation of responses into a 3-level satisfaction scale. 75% satisfaction is the success criterion.
2.					
Internal project personnel	2. To what extent is the information service incorporated into the decision making process at the local level?	(a) Onsite personnel for follow-up visit. (b) School Records (if possible).	Onsite visit: (a) interviews (b) existing school records.	Structured interview format	Tabulation of responses into a 3-level utilization scale. 50% reported information use is the success criterion.
3.					
4.					
5.					

Once the program description was clear, the evaluation audience was identified, and the evaluation questions were specified, the evaluation team could turn its attention to the measurement procedures, i.e., the information sources and instruments. The evaluators decided to follow up on a sample of the requests that arrived during the fall of that school year. The office generally received about 10 to 15 requests for information a month. The motivations for the requests varied from specific needs relating to a teacher or school's planned instructional changes to an educator's general desire to keep informed. The requesting individuals consisted of teachers, principals, curriculum directors and linkage facilitators located in the district. The team decided to draw up a questionnaire to be sent to individuals making the request, asking how often they had used the service before, what their aim was in requesting the information, and how closely the information need was tied to specific policy or instructional matters. This questionnaire would be sent to a wide sample of the clients, representative of all the requests in terms of regions and personnel making the contact. The evaluation team then would plan follow-up investigations for some of these cases, particularly those in which the respondents indicated a definite need. These follow-ups would consist of interviews with key local people and review of existing records, such as lesson plans, that might reflect the utilization of the new information.

As noted, the planned analysis was straightforward, consisting of tabulated percentages and content analysis of the interviews. The evaluation team considered what outcomes were possible and how ready they would be to accept impact information, both positive and negative. For instance, if the investigation indicated that use was not being made of the information, the team recognized that this feedback would be accepted

as a realistic picture, however unfortunate the conclusion might be. Credibility is severely compromised by an evaluation process in which, following positive feedback, the program personnel claim success but following negative feedback, they criticize the study or start a new one.

The framework in Section Three also includes consideration of the degree of implementation of the dissemination service. The point here is that an evaluation team wants to make sure that whatever conclusions it eventually derives about program effectiveness are based on the program itself, operating as planned. What often happens instead is that the program never really gets carried out as intended, for any of a variety of reasons including funding changes, poor management, over- or underresponse by clients, and so forth. When this happens, a negative evaluation is usually the result, and it is important for an evaluator to know that the failure is not due to the originally planned program. This is particularly important for formative evaluation efforts in which the evaluation gets under-way at the same time the program does--that is, at a point when the evaluation team may not have a clear idea of what the program will look like in operation.

In our case study, the information distribution service had been operating for two years, and so the evaluators knew there was little chance for any surprises to occur which would interrupt its normal functioning. Nevertheless, for the fall term which the evaluation was to cover, they carefully monitored program operation. They made sure that the request frequency was similar to years past, that the computer was working and, in general, that the service was progressing as expected. This gave them added confidence in the validity of their later follow-up measure.

Worksheet 3b

SPECIFYING THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Unit of Analysis (description of service):

Response to information requests

Objective:

See Worksheet 1

Is the service to be evaluated:

A single case of a provision of a service?	
A cluster of similar events?	∅
General services for all clients?	
The whole program?	
Other (state): _____	

Component service description:

Service (list)	Objective	Recipient
1. No subcomponent services		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Worksheet 4

ASSESSING THE COST OF THE EVALUATION

1. Funds available for the evaluation: No set limit

2. Estimate of expenses involved in the evaluation:

Staff salaries	~~$1,000~~
Consultants	1,200
Data Instruments	100
Telephone and Postage	30
Equipment	150
Computer Costs	0
Travel	250
Other (specify): photocopy	30
TOTAL:	$2,760

3. Do available funds exceed the planned expenses? YES X NO ___

Worksheet 5

EVALUATION TIMELOG

Activity	Starting Date	Completion Date
1. Describe the dissemination program to be evaluated.	Aug. 1980	Aug. 1980
2. Clarify the goals and purposes of the evaluation.		
a. Identify audience	"	"
b. Delineate evaluation questions	"	"
c. Assess practical issues	"	"
d. Determine data sources	"	"
3. Implement the evaluation plan.		
a. Assemble data:		
Data source A (describe) _____	Feb. 1981	April 1981
Data source B (describe) _____	May 1981	May 1981
Data source C (describe) _____		
b. Analyze data.	May 1981	May 1981
4. Assess program impact and report the results.		
a. Determine impact and draw conclusions	June 1981	June 1981
b. Report orally (if appropriate)		
c. Final report	June 1981	July 1981

Worksheet 6

EVALUATION PLAN REVIEW SHEET

A. Feasibility of task to be evaluated.

Is the task:

- Central to your work? ✓
- Frequently performed? ✓
- One that affects many people? ✓
- Open to alternative styles of management? To some degree
- Affordable to evaluate? ✓

(Answers should be affirmative.)

B. Feasibility of the evaluation plan.

Does the plan:

- Address current concerns? ✓
- Accommodate existing resources and timelines? ✓
- Avoid disrupting normal activity? ✓
- Promise to yield the data you need? ✓

(Answers should be affirmative.)

C. Continuity of evaluation efforts.

Should past evaluation efforts continue?
Yes, but these must be augmented by the present study.

Are past efforts used in the current plan?
NO

How can you build on current effort for future evaluation?
Perhaps use the questionnaire for yearly or other regular feedback.

How can evaluation be integrated into other activities?
Use for program improvement, proposal report.

The third part of the framework concerns data collecting and analysis. After the fall term ended, the evaluation team found that 60 information requests had been made. They agreed on a sample of 35 for initial follow-up by questionnaire. These represented the full 60 in that all of the districts were included; there was diversity in the positions of local personnel initiating the requests; there were new and experienced users of the service; and there were both further inquiries and no inquiries for full articles following the mailing of the ERIC search. Through the sampling processes involved in the data collection, it was again very helpful to have the participation of outside people to dispel doubts that the sampling was not biased toward positive results.

After receiving the 35 completed questionnaires, the evaluation team tabulated and categorized the responses. They chose seven for follow-up site visits. Two of these indicated strong use made of the information, two indicated little use, and three reported moderate degree of use. Let us examine how the follow up was conducted for one of the two high-use cases.

At the site studied, the individual who had made the inquiry was the curriculum director of a school. She had asked for articles dealing with the relationship between math achievement and time-on-task, and a variable called "academic engaged time." In the questionnaire she wrote that she had been only moderately satisfied with the completeness of the articles from the search, and she supplemented these with inquiries made at the education department of the nearby university. She also said that the information she gathered had been very useful at her school.

One of the evaluators contacted the curriculum director and scheduled a morning visit to the school for interviews that would be conducted with her, with the principal, and with one of the math teachers. In each of

these discussions the interviewer asked what the initial motivations were for gathering the information, how the information influenced decisions that were made inside the school, how school conditions changed as a result of implementing the decisions, and how the process could have been improved. In addition the interviewer requested materials and records that would reflect the nature and extent of the change.

In the course of the discussion, the evaluator learned that the school personnel had been concerned about lower-than-average math scores on standardized tests, and decided to seek information on how they could alleviate the problem. The curriculum director had read a research report that showed there were surprisingly large differences in time allocations for math instruction among districts, schools and classrooms. In addition, there was a difference in the nature of instruction such that "academic engaged time" varied even when class time allocations were comparable. The director and principal had two meetings with teachers in which this information was presented and discussed. As a result of this process, two actions were decided upon. First, the director contracted with a knowledgeable university educator for a workshop instructing teachers about ways to increase the quality of "academic engaged time" during math instruction. Second, the principal made a change in the average allocation for math instruction per day from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. The capacity project's information had been used in the following ways:

1. It increased the knowledge of school personnel regarding the potential influence of the variable in question.
2. It helped them determine that their daily time allocation to math was slightly below average.
3. It helped the curriculum director in her search for an educator knowledgeable about that line of research.

In their interviews the curriculum director, the principal and the math teacher all expressed optimism about the project, but it was still too early to determine the results of the change. The evaluator was able to obtain from the school several records of the change: the agenda and other materials from the workshop that was conducted, and a sample of several teachers' daily math lesson plans, before and after the period in question.

After all the interviews at the selected sites were conducted, the evaluation team organized all of its questionnaires and interview data to reflect the sample as a whole. With regard to the first evaluation question, they found that of all the respondents, about 30 percent were very satisfied with the extent of the information they received, about 40 percent were somewhat or moderately satisfied, and about 30 percent felt there was substantial room for improvement. Regarding the second evaluation question, they found that about 20 percent of their sample reported no subsequent utilization of the information, 50 percent reported a beneficial gain in awareness among staff, but not of a level leading to a decisive role in policy making or practices, and 30 percent reported that the role of the information in changing relevant practices was very important. The evaluation team also found that the chances of utilization were increased when an administrator made the request, when the information was shared with several people, and when the inquiry was based on a specific, identifiable need.

Worksheet 7

DATA ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
1. Were any of the planned respondents unable to participate in data collection?	___	✓

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

2. Were data collection procedures nonuniform in the sample?	✓	___

If YES, describe:
Interviews were structured on a case-by-case basis, determined from the returned questionnaires.

Course of action:
Statistical analysis not appropriate. Descriptive Content analysis will be performed for each follow-up case.

3. Were data instruments incorrectly filled out:	___	✓

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

	YES	NO
4. Did any difficulties arise in the data collection that might have compromised the validity of the data?	___	✓

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

5. Did any difficulties arise in data analysis?	✓	___

If YES, describe: Data were able to show that utilization chances increased when an administrator made the request, when the information was shared among several people and when the inquiry was based on a specific need.

~~Course of action:~~ Course of action: Not changed.

6. Was a secondary analysis called for when reviewing the results?	___	___

If YES, describe:

Course of action:

Worksheet 8

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY FORM*

Evaluation question (state):
To what extent do clients perceive their informational needs satisfied by the information distribution service?

1. Was a clear answer obtained? (state):
   30% - very satisfied
   40% - somewhat satisfied
   30% - not satisfied
2. Unintended positive effects (if any):

   none

   a. How valuable is this effect?

   b. Is the effect stable?

3. Unintended negative effects (if any):

   none

   a. How serious is this effect?

   b. Is the problem resolvable in future applications?

4. Overall nature of impact:
   Percentage of satisfied clients fell short of the targeted 50%. Improvements in the service are indicated.
5. Conclusions (outline):
   Upgrade the scope of the information service:
   (a) expand materials center
   (b) expand information sources beyond ERIC.

*NOTE: Use one page for each evaluation question.

Evaluation question (state):
To what extent is the information provided by the service incorporated into the decision making process at the local level?

1. Was a clear answer obtained? (state):
   20% - no subsequent utilization
   50 % - gain in staff awareness
   30 % - very important in changing practices

2. Unintended positive effects (if any):

   None

   a. How valuable is this effect?

   b. Is the effect stable?

3. Unintended negative effects (if any):

   None

   a. How serious is this effect?

   b. Is the problem resolvable in future applications?

4. Overall nature of impact:
   Evidence indicates that our information is being used. Results exceed the targeted 50% by 30 points.

5. Conclusions (outline):

Finally, it was time for the team to draw conclusions about the dissemination service. They decided that the extent of the dissemination resources was somewhat limited. Possible refinements would include the expansion of their Material Centers and the inclusion of other clearinghouses or information sources to supplement ERIC in their data searches. On the other hand, the utilization evidence was quite strong. The information being disseminated was making a difference on the local level. Because attention had been given to the planning, implementation and assessment stages of the impact evaluation, the team now had clear evidence supporting claims for the usefulness of their dissemination service.

SECTION FIVE

SUMMARY

A Disseminator's Guide for Evaluating Impact was written, primarily, with two groups of disseminators in mind. These are the State Capacity Building Project and Regional Exchange Project staffs.

State Capacity Building Project clients include the host state agency, intermediate service agencies and local schools. Dissemination processes have included the utilization of data bases, promising practices files, human resource files and the development of linkage systems. It is critical in evaluation planning to determine which processes, strategies and methods are being emphasized.

Regional Exchanges are part of a system identified as the Research and Development Exchange. The major purpose is to aid school improvement by providing information, technical assistance and/or training; by promoting the use of R&D outcomes; by promoting coordination among various groups; by increasing understanding and use of information about client needs. Client groups include state, intermediate and local education agencies, as well as other laboratories. Differences in client emphasis are important to note in developing an impact evaluation plan.

Because it is not feasible to conduct impact evaluation on all activities in which disseminators are involved, decisions have to be made regarding what to evaluate. Factors which are important to consider include:

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Recipients of the evaluation information
- Accomplishment priority of objectives

- Likelihood of yielding useful information
- Centrality of task or activity
- Costs of conducting the evaluation

Other considerations important to the development of an impact evaluation plan are the selection of appropriate units of analysis, determining whether the plan is reasonable and determining which efforts should be ongoing.

A framework was developed which is comprised of four major components. Included are the program description, evaluation focus, data collection and analysis and impact assessment.

The program description should include four elements:

- What is being disseminated
- To whom it is being disseminated
- Purpose for which it is being disseminated
- Means by which it is being disseminated

The evaluation focus should identify the audience for the evaluation information, delineate the questions to be addressed and define the data sources. In addition, the evaluation should provide a means for determining the degree to which a program was implemented.

Data collection and analysis include a plan for collecting the data, but the plan must be flexible enough to allow modification should such a need be created by unforeseen obstacles or problems. The data analysis involves cleaning the data, analyzing the data as planned and reanalyzing the data in light of new relationships among the data which have become evident during the initial analysis.

Impact assessment is determined by answering four basic questions:

- Were specific objectives achieved?
- Were there any positive unintended effects?

- Were there any negative unintended effects?
- Was the program implemented as intended?

Conclusions from the assessment are derived from the questions:

- How close did the actual impact come to the intended impact?
- What factors facilitated achievement of objectives? Hindered?
- What was the role of unintended effects?
- What was the overall success of the service?
- Which segments should be repeated? Discontinued? Refined?

The application of the framework is dependent upon the specific situation existing in the program or project to be evaluated. That is, different dissemination programs emphasize different processes; the primary clients vary from program to program; who or which agency is most interested in the study varies across programs; each of these factors must be taken into account when actually developing an evaluation plan within the guidelines of the framework provided.

REFERENCES

Capitol Publications, Inc. How To: Evaluate Education Programs. July 1980.

Faddis, Bonnie, et al. Handbook: Evaluating Program Implementation. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Portland, Oregon. 1981.

Kiefert, James and Arthur Maser. Program/Project Evaluation Guide. University of Washington Press. March 1977.

Radnor, Michael, Durward Hofler, Robert Rich (eds.) "Information Dissemination and Exchange for Educational Innovations: Conceptual and Implementation Issues of A Regionally Based Nationwide System." National Institute of Education. December 1977.

Smith, Judy. "The Educational Developer as Change Agent," Counterpoint, Vol. 2, No. 1. Dissemin/Action. Falls Church, Virginia. May 1981.

APPENDIX

Annotated List of Resources

ANNOTATED LIST OF RESOURCES

Abt Associates, Inc. "Rural America: A Social and Educational History of Ten Communities" (summary). June 1975.

Deal, Terrence E. And Samuel C. Nutt. "Promoting, Guiding and Surviving Change in School Districts." Abt Associates, Inc., June 1971.

Herriott, Robert E. "Federal Initiatives and Rural School Improvement: Findings From the Experimental Schools Program." Abt Associates, Inc., March 1980.

The Abt Associates' longitudinal study of educational change in rural America was a five-year study of an experimental program in which ten small, rural school districts were funded (National Institute of Education) to improve the quality of their local education. This extensive study of the Experimental Schools Program utilized eight separate but coordinated efforts. The Abt Associates longitudinal study appears to exemplify an evaluation of change and impact. A study of such magnitude is not conducted easily or inexpensively; the wealth of findings can make the effort well worthwhile.

Adams, Kay Angona and Jerry P. Walker. Improving the Accountability of Career Education Programs: Evaluation Guidelines and Checklists. The Center for Vocational Education: Ohio State University, 1977.

This guide is one of a series of five handbooks intended to help local education personnel with measurement and evaluation. The handbook is divided into thirteen stand-alone units and organized around an "Evaluation Profile." The profile is used to highlight critical ingredients for planning, implementing, communicating and using the results from evaluations of career education programs. The units themselves are organized around checklists for assessing in detail the different aspects of an evaluation plan, instruments and reports.

Bank, Adrianne and Nancy C. Snidman. Guidebook for Evaluating Dissemination Activities: Resources for NDN Practitioners. Center for the Study of Evaluation: UCLA, Los Angeles, 1981.

This guidebook was developed by the Center for the Study of Evaluation under a subcontract from THE NETWORK, Inc. The two-year effort involved participation of numerous persons involved with the National Diffusion Network, including numerous Developer/Demonstrators and State Facilitators. The guide approaches evaluation as "a set of techniques for finding out what works" so that analysis of the data, however collected, can provide direction for improving the tasks of dissemination as defined by the NDN.

Bateman, Peter G. and Robert K. Yin. Targeting Educational Improvement Services (draft). The Case Study Institute. Washington, D.C. March 1981

This report is one in a series of studies initiated in 1978 by Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. The series explores issues of information equity in education. This report examines one specific issue: whether educational improvement services are being targeted to those in greatest need. The study is openly exploratory, designed to assess (1) whether future research would be fruitful and (2) how such research might be conducted. Seven mini-case studies of selected service improvement organizations (SIOs), conduits by which publicly funded new ideas or materials are distributed to local schools for implementation in the classroom, are presented. The summary section of the report provides tentative lessons concerning four major questions:

- To what extent do SIOs engage in targeting to minority or needy users?
- Is there a conflict for SIOs between the objectives of equity and improvement?
- If targeting is done, what factors make it succeed?
- If targeting is not done, what factors inhibit such a strategy?

A set of recommendations about further research is drawn from the tentative lessons about these issues. Findings indicated that targeting does occur among the seven exemplary cases and that each SIO seemed in some way to be serving schools in need. Two types of further research are recommended: confirmatory studies and assistance studies (aimed at identifying ways of improving targeting among existing SIOs).

Faddis, Bonnie, Warren Evans, Marilyn Hartzell, Patricia Ruzicka and Kathryn Morimitzu. Handbook: Evaluating Program Implementation. ESEA Title I Evaluation Technical Assistance Centers. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Portland, Oregon. 1981.

The handbook was designed to assist school district personnel in designing and conducting an implementation study. A step-by-step approach to evaluating program implementation is presented. The handbook is divided into four sections, each designed to answer one of four planning questions as follows:

1. Do you know what area of your program you are going to evaluate?
2. Have you formulated specific evaluation questions?
3. Do you know how you will collect information to answer your question(s)?

4. Do you know how you will use information after it is collected?

Extensive appendices of data collection instruments are included in the Handbook.

Faddis, Bonnie and Marilyn Hartzell. Simulation Activities: Evaluating Program Implementation. ESEA Title I Evaluation Technical Assistance Centers. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon. 1981.

This book accompanies the Evaluating Program Implementation Handbook and contains simulation activities which correspond to the explanations and examples presented in the handbook.

"Focused Review of Literature: Improving Educational Practice," Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. February 1980.

This literature review, focused on defining and analyzing current findings related to the improvement of educational practice, found that achievement of improved practice was integrally related to the adoption of innovations and to the dynamics of planned change.

The literature review identified three factors seen as critical to causing improved educational practice:

- Appropriate information that addresses the real and perceived problems of practitioners
- Acquisition of new, personal skills necessary to carry out an implementation
- Availability of skilled technical assistance in dealing with the political realities associated with a change effort

Hughes, Phillip, N. Russell, D. McConachy and W. Harlen. Questions to Ask When Planning an Evaluation: A Procedure for Planning School Evaluation Where Access to Extensive Inservice or Extensive Consultant Assistance Is Not Possible. Teachers As Evaluators Project. Curriculum Development Centre. Canberra, Australia, March 1980.

In the foreword, the authors state that "experience shows that when teachers actively participate in planning an evaluation, they develop a strong commitment to both the conduct of the evaluation and the implementation of its recommendations." This monograph was developed with that experience in mind. The monograph is divided into four sections: Resource Document 1 - "Questions to Ask When Planning an Evaluation," Resource Document 2 - "Curriculum Evaluation: an Introduction", Resource Document 3 - "Evaluation of Dimmesdale High School" and Section 4 - "A Plan for Evaluating a Pastoral Care System."

Kiefert, James and Arthur Maser. Program/Project Evaluation Guide. University of Washington Press. March 1977

This document is designed to be used as a workbook for planning the evaluation of a program or project. As such, it can serve as a program planning guide as well as a program evaluating guide.

Long, Susan A. and Randall A. Cognetta. Questionnaires: Their Development and Use. San Mateo County Office of Education. September 1978.

Questionnaires can be a useful tool for assessing the impact of dissemination activities. However, the construction of a questionnaire that will yield useful, valid results can be a difficult task. This monograph describes the construction and use of questionnaires.

Sections in the monograph include: (1) advantages and limitations of the questionnaire, (2) parts of a questionnaire, (3) pre-testing the tryout of a questionnaire, (4) the cover letter, (5) distribution, (6) getting them back and (7) compiling and analyzing responses.

Louis, Karen Seashore, Sheila Rosenblum and James Molitar. Linking R&D With Schools -- Strategies for Knowledge Use and School Improvement: A Summary. Abt Associates, Inc., for the National Institute of Education. July 1981.

This document presents an overview and major outcomes from a three-year study of NIE's Research and Development Utilization (RDU) program. Lessons, findings and implications from that program which may be useful in designing future dissemination and school improvement activities are discussed.

Madey, Doren L., et al. Interim Report: An Evaluation of NIE's State Dissemination Grants Program. NTS Research Corporation. August 1979.

The NTS Research Corporation's study is a multi-year effort sponsored by NIE's Program on Dissemination and Improvement of Practice. The study of the capacity building component of the State Dissemination Grants Program is guided by two major questions:

- Is dissemination capacity being built as a result of this Program? If so, how?
- Is the Program having an effect? If so, what is the nature of the effect?

Of particular use to disseminators interested in evaluating impact of dissemination activities are the processes and procedures used by the NTS Research Corporation in this study. Information on process, procedures and instruments can be extrapolated through analysis of this and other reports resulting from the study.

Owen, John. The Impact of the Australian Science Education Project on Schools. Curriculum Development Centre. Canberra, Australia. 1978

The Australian Science Education Project developed materials for science education in grades 7-10 during 1969-1974. The project represented the first program of curriculum materials developed on a nationwide basis, and was fully supported by Australian and all State Departments of Education funds.

This report is an account of the dissemination phase of ASEP in 1975-1976. The study investigates the extent of the use of the materials, the reasons for the first purchase of ASEP materials by schools, and examines barriers to the use of the materials. Factors are analyzed both on a state-by-state basis and on the basis of case studies of schools in each state.

Because the study was concerned with a range of questions related to the impact of ASEP materials on Australian schools, a combination of methods was used to obtain data. Information was collected from government department records, from historical documents, and through interviews with teachers and other persons who were potentially influential in the diffusion of ASEP materials.

Roberts, Jane M. E. Implementation of Innovations in Educational Organization and Instruction: Working Paper. Research for Better Schools, Inc. June 1978

This paper describes numerous models, studies and research findings related to the implementation of innovations in educational organizaton and instruction. The implications of research on the processes, influences and effects considered to be important variables in the implementation of educational innovations are discussed.

Schmidt, Richard E., John W. Scanlon and James B. Bell. Evaluability Assessment: Making Public Programs Work Better. Project SHARE. Human Services Monograph Series, No. 14. November 1979.

This monograph was designed to describe techniques that can be used in making public programs work more effectively. The document is targeted toward evaluators who are charged with informing management and policy officials about the effectiveness of their programs. The method described is intended to make possible a closer link between management and evaluators, in the hope that the net result will be better program management and more effective programs.

"Evaluability Assessment" (EA) is a descriptive and analytic process intended to produce a reasoned basis for proceeding with an evaluation of use to both management and policymakers. The process was developed by the members of the program evaluation group of the Urban Institute between 1960 and 1978. The object of an EA is to arrive at a program description that can be evaluated--a description that permits a program to be measured with some reasonable assurance that the evaluation can be done and that predetermined expectations can be realized.

Sieber, Sam D. Knowledge for What?: An Evaluation of an Educational Dissemination System. U.S. Virgin Islands, Department of Education. January 1981.

This report presents the procedures used in and results obtained from a survey of primary clients' satisfaction with the Virgin Islands Educational Dissemination System, Department of Education during its first year of operation. The Virgin Islands dissemination project is a State Capacity Project which uses full-time "linkers" (field agents) who meet with clients at all levels of the educational system, learn about the information needs, refer the client's request to a computerized retrieval agency in the states, and deliver the information to clients when it arrives. A special purpose of the study was to determine whether the impact of the service could be enhanced by concentrating on certain "promising clients" (a procedure known as market segmentation). The report references a System Assessment Survey designed by the author to be used in the evaluation of State Capacity Building Projects. The Survey is available from the author upon request.

Smith, Nick L., editor. Metaphors for Evaluation: Sources of New Methods. Volume I, New Perspectives in Evaluation. Sage Publications, Inc. Beverly Hills, California. 1981.

This book reports on the results of seven efforts to identify new methods for use in evaluation by studying existing procedures used in other disciplines.

_____. New Techniques for Evaluation. Volume II, New Perspectives in Evaluation. Sage Publications, Inc. Beverly Hills, California. 1981.

This volume introduces a range of new evaluation techniques and discusses their application. Included are cost analysis methods, exploratory data analysis methods, criticism methods for appraising evaluation studies, product evaluation methods and journalistic methods.

Weber, Margaret B. "An Evaluation Model for Innovative Individualized Programs," Studies in Educational Evaluation, Vol. 3, No. 2. Summer 1977. (Pp. 87-93.)

This article describes the tri-level process model used in the evaluation of an innovative secondary program. Findings and implications for the evaluation of innovative programs are discussed. It was found that Level I (learner diagnosis and development) and Level III (evaluation of the program as compared against a criterion program) of the program evaluation process did not yield usable data. Level II (where the innovative program is judged against its own objectives) was the only area in which traditional evaluation methods were productive.

Weber suggests that the issue of "effectiveness" must be determined internal to the program to be evaluated if commitment to responsive change is indeed important. She points out that it is this thrust that emphasizes "needs assessment" in evaluation, as needs assessment is a synonym for the identification of expressed drives. Therefore, program effectiveness can be determined only by assessing the "fit" between program outcomes and expressed needs.